

## **Letter from Councilmembers Phil Andrews and Nancy Dacek to residents in the Muncaster Mill Road area**

January 2001

Dear Neighbors,

Nothing is more important than the safety of our families.

That's why we have been working hard to win safety improvements along Muncaster Mill Road.

Unfortunately, it wasn't until last May's bus accident, which took the life of the school bus driver and injured several children, that we really got the State of Maryland's attention. And now we've seen another fatality in the past couple of weeks.

No one knows the problems on this road better than you who live there and drive the road day in and day out. That's why we organized a meeting last year at Magruder High School so that the community could make its case directly to the State Department of Transportation, which balked in the past at making improvements.

Over 200 residents responded to the call and put state officials on notice that we expected their help.

Here were the facts that together we laid out for them:

- Between 1995 and 1999 there were 359 reported accidents on the five mile road – more than double the statewide average accident rate. This resulted in three deaths and 179 injuries.
- School buses will continue to travel these roads to pick up children.
- Trucks, including such landscaping trucks as the one involved in last spring's accident, will continue to travel those roads to service local residents
- Magruder High School has – and will continue to have – hundreds of students driving to and from school. Muncaster Mill Road is the only way in and out.

***At last, we are getting action from the state Department of Transportation. The Governor's transportation program includes \$10.8 million – with the money likely to go for intersection modifications, widening the shoulder of the road, improving visibility by leveling bumps and hills, and eliminating some curves.***

This is on top of work this summer that included:

- Resurfacing of the road between Emory Lane and Avery Road

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- Raised pavement markings
- More speed limit signs and a reduced speed limit near Redland Middle School
- Flashing lights at Redland Middle School
- Changed timing on the traffic light at Needwood
- Tree trimming and brush clearing to improve sight lines

These are very important improvements but we believe there are other issues that should be looked at, including:

- Increased enforcement of the speed limit – a huge concern of residents
- A long-sought-after traffic light at Emory Lane and Muncaster Mill Road – the State says it's not warranted and is looking at a "roundabout" instead, with a decision in January
- Traffic control measures at the entrance to Magruder High School – again the State says they don't recommend such measures

We don't agree with the State on these last two and we're going to keep up the pressure.

Beyond these immediate steps, the County's Planning Board is considering more long-term options, including:

- Widening portions of Muncaster Mill Road to four lanes; and/or
- Extending Mid-County Highway from Shady Grove Road to meet Muncaster Mill Road just before Avery Road.

What do you think about these options? We'd like to know. You can write us at the address above or find us on the Web at [www.co.mo.md.us/council](http://www.co.mo.md.us/council) .

We promise you that we'll keep working to improve the safety of Muncaster Mill Road – there's much more to do.

Sincerely,

Nancy Dacek  
Councilmember

Phil Andrews  
Councilmember